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MAYOR JERRY SANDERS FACT SHEET

MAYOR KICKS OFF PILOT PROJECT TO TEST POSSIBLE NEW SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER

Testing will determine whether converting wastewater is safe, reliable

Mayor Jerry Sanders kicked off the start of a year-long pilot project that will determine the feasibility of converting wastewater into drinking water. The project comes at a time when the city is exploring all possible options to diversify its supply of drinking water.

“This pilot project is basic due diligence,” the mayor said. “At a time when all of us are concerned about the rising cost and availability of water, we owe it to our citizens to see if we can find another safe, healthy and reliable source. Like everyone else, I look forward to the results of this year-long study.”

To perform the pilot study, the city built a test facility at the North City Water Reclamation Plant, where the city purifies wastewater into so-called “reclaimed” water that can be used for industrial landscaping and other non-drinking purposes. The new facility will purify this water even further – in theory, into water clean and safe enough to drink. The finished product will be pumped back into the reclaimed water system for industrial use, meaning **none of the water in this pilot study will be put into the city’s drinking supply.** This year-long testing of one million gallons a day will provide scientific data that will help determine whether the process is clean and safe.

To cover the \$11.8 million cost of the pilot study, the city temporarily hiked water rates by 3 percent in January 2009, then eliminated that rate increase in September 2010 after collecting the necessary revenue.

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